



Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice

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NEWS BULLETIN

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OJJ OMBUDSMAN KIM MIMS NAMED DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Interim Deputy Secretary Mary Livers has named Ombudsman Kim Mims to the position of Director of Education. Mrs. Mims, who has served as OJJ Family Ombudsman since August 2007, will oversee educational programs and activities for the three secure care facilities and will supervise the Education Specialists who work with non-secure youth. As Family Ombudsman, Mrs. Mims often worked with our schools and parents to mediate educational issues.

"Mrs. Mims brings a unique skill set to this position," Dr. Livers said. "As a 20-year veteran educator experienced with at-risk youth and special needs youth, and having served for a year as our Family Ombudsman gaining firsthand experience working with our youth and their families, Mrs. Mims already has the perspective, knowledge and experience to hit the ground running and move our educational programming forward. I am delighted that she has accepted this new challenge and I look forward to working with her in this vital position."

"I know Kim Mims to be a fair, caring and conscientious 'people person'," Dr. Livers continued. "She is a good listener, and I have seen her accomplish a great deal. She's a go-getter - these are qualities that I see in her, that OJJ can use in a major leadership role."

Mrs. Mims underwent three weeks of intensive LA MOD training at Jetson Center for Youth when she first came aboard. LA MOD focuses on a therapeutic, child-centered secure care environment. She has 20 years experience as an educator at LaSalle Elementary School in East Baton Rouge Parish, rising from classroom teacher to literacy and instructional support teacher, dean of students and finally serving as principal. Mrs. Mims noted that LaSalle Elementary is the only school in the district with a dyslexia program. The school also has a very large special needs population, serving at-risk children.

The last year that Mrs. Mims was principal at LaSalle, 2006, the school posted the highest academic growth in the East Baton Rouge Parish School District, under the state's School and District Accountability System.

The Baton Rouge native holds a Bachelor's degree in marketing and business, Master of Education, Specialist in Reading and plus-30 in education, all from Southern University.

“My expectations for the education staff is for each of them to embrace a positive change in the culture to align with the mission, vision and guiding principles of this agency,” said Mrs. Mims. “My goal is to create an educational environment where kids can experience success,” she continued. “Most of OJJ’s kids have educational challenges – we have to meet them where they are, and develop and utilize strategies to help meet their needs.”

Mrs. Mims added that one of our educational goals should be to provide a non-threatening environment where kids can feel good about themselves so their academic achievement will improve. To do that, we need to be creative, not by eliminating the traditional educational system, but by creating a learning environment that fits our youths’ learning styles and abilities and disabilities, she said. “That’s the challenge,” Mrs. Mims stated. “We need to engage in teambuilding to meet our kids’ needs and do whatever it takes to help them succeed. We need to get to know them and know how they learn.”

Mrs. Mims said we will continue to work with the LA Department of Education’s Special School District (SSD), which provides Special Education teachers in our facilities. “SSD will be an integral part of what we do, with our large special needs population,” Mrs. Mims said. “Collaboration between SSD and the regular education teachers will create a win-win situation for our youth.”

“We will expect our teachers to embrace collaboration with our partners who contribute to our youths’ educational programs,” Mrs. Mims said. “A key part will be utilization of research, data and strategies that inform us where our kids are educationally, and where they need to go to experience success. I would ask our teachers to come with a willingness to get involved and work intimately with the needs of our kids. That may mean doing things differently.”

“We need to let data drive instruction, and use research, best practices and teaching strategies that fit our population,” she continued. “It will be important to take a close look at the tools we use to evaluate our kids to determine their educational level. We need tools that really tell us what we need to know and provide enough information to inform instruction and strategies needed to fit our kids.”

“We need to truly embrace partnerships with community educators, local school districts, families and other stakeholders - get them all involved in the process to align with community schools,” Mrs. Mims said. “We must create a working relationship so our kids can make a smooth transition back to their schools when they are released.”

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